

People who receive services there truly do have a chance to escape poverty. They find employment right at DC Central Kitchen or in Washington's hospitality industry. DC Central Kitchen is helping people find jobs that pay living wages and obtain lasting careers.

In 1989, a nightclub manager named Robert Egger founded DC Central Kitchen. He was frustrated with his volunteer experiences at traditional charitable responses to help end hunger and homelessness. His idea was to create a "central kitchen" where wasted food could be turned into balanced meals for shelters and nonprofits and jobless adults could be trained in the culinary arts.

Of course, the critics said it couldn't be done. It was unwise. It was unsustainable. The concept was just not possible, they said. Well, they were wrong. And Robert was ahead of the curve and ahead of his time.

DC Central Kitchen's successes have been celebrated nationally. Its story has been featured in outlets ranging from National Geographic to The Washington Post to The Chronicle of Philanthropy and many more places. It works every day to transform food that would otherwise be wasted into nutritious meals for homeless shelters and nonprofits. It serves farm-to-school menus to low-income schoolchildren, all while creating job opportunities for unemployed adults who have completed its culinary job training program.

The numbers are clear. Last year, 91 individuals graduated from the program; 88 percent of them found good-paying jobs. Fifty percent of last year's graduates received a wage increase within 12 months of being on that job.

DC Central Kitchen has also expanded access to healthy foods by making them available at corner stores in D.C.'s food deserts. Last year alone, it supported store owners in selling more than 207,000 units of affordable, healthy snacks and produce.

Mr. Speaker, DC Central Kitchen is a shining example of what can be done to truly help the underserved in our communities all across this Nation. By giving individuals career training and job skills, it allows them to break the back of intergenerational poverty that has hindered the lives of so many.

No one in America should go hungry. Everyone deserves a shot at living a full, healthy, and productive life. DC Central Kitchen shows us this is possible.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations to the staff, to the volunteers, to the students, and to all those who had this vision with DC Central Kitchen.

THANK YOU, LAW ENFORCEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to

praise law enforcement across the Nation and the State of Missouri for their dedication, courage, and sacrifice in serving our communities.

This week is National Police Week. We should thank police every week, but this time of year provides a special opportunity to give honor where honor is due. Law enforcement officers deserve our deep appreciation and respect.

Police officers do an excellent job protecting the residents of my district, from Columbia to Waynesville, to Warrensburg and throughout Missouri. They stand ready to help wherever needed. That is why, today, I am introducing the Police Officers Protecting Children Act. This bill would allow schools that want to allow retired or off-duty law enforcement officers to be armed as a security measure to protect children in our schools. If a school wants to allow off-duty or retired police to protect their students, the Federal Government shouldn't stop them.

The Police Officers Protecting Children Act is even more important for schools in our rural communities where law enforcement may take a significant amount of time to respond to an emergency. A well-placed retired or off-duty officer could save lives.

Law enforcement in my district have shown their support for this bill because they know firsthand that police officers have the training and experience to protect our children when it counts. They have the trust of our communities and have years of experience carrying a weapon. I thank them for their service and their willingness to protect our children while they are at school.

Law enforcement officers live out the honorable duo of bravery and service. They put their lives on the line every day to protect our communities, often without the thanks they deserve. They work day in and day out patrolling our neighborhoods, getting drugs off the streets, and protecting us from criminals who seek to do us harm.

In Missouri, we honor the brave men and women who carry the badge as police officers. This National Police Week, I am glad to recognize those officers and their bravery and service protecting the people of Missouri.

So to the police around the Nation and in my home State of Missouri, I say to you: Thank you for your service. You make a difference every day, and we are so grateful for you.

GROWING UP IN A LAW ENFORCEMENT FAMILY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give a very personal thanks to our men and women in uniform during this National Police Week.

I was raised the son of the chief of police and the head of the fire depart-

ment of El Dorado, Kansas, for some 25 years. In that time, he taught me discipline and values. He taught me there was right and there was wrong, that some things are black and white in the world, and my father represented what the law was in my community.

Today, I celebrate this week with him and the men and women who served with him who gave me a deep respect for the rule of law and those who serve daily to uphold it. Certainly, I am the person I am today because of what my parents taught me, my family, and the community, and they still do to this day.

I can remember growing up and the first day my dad brought home Rene, our trained police dog, and how that dog became part of our family, a very gentle dog until one morning, we were playing football in the backyard, and one of my friends tackled me. We watched that police dog climb a 6-foot-high fence to come to my rescue.

I remember my dad pulling people from fires. I remember riding in the back of an old Jeep that was overhauled from an Army Reserve to fight prairie fires and grass fires, something I am sure that kids wouldn't be allowed to do today. My dad took me to the firing range time and time again, and I would watch my dad shoot 25 rounds into a small circle the size of a quarter week after week, training to do his job right. I remember him getting called out to domestic disturbances and crime scenes. I remember him disarming people with weapons time and time again, putting his life on the line.

But it is just not my family, Mr. Speaker. Families across the country have loved ones who serve our communities, States, and country.

Earlier this week, President Trump gave a great message: "No one asked these selfless men and women to enlist in this righteous cause or to enroll as foot soldiers in the eternal struggle against crime and violence. They joined the cause because their hearts were big and full of amazing courage."

Mr. Speaker, I salute the men and women in uniform and thank them for their service.

MY RECENT TRAVEL TO AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer a report on my recent travels to Afghanistan, where our Armed Forces remain engaged at a critical front of the global war on terrorism.

I have been a part of several congressional delegations to Afghanistan to survey conditions there, particularly as it concerns the progress being made by Afghan women and girls to attain equal rights. I was honored once again to lead a delegation of my colleagues to the region to conduct oversight of American operations and better inform our efforts here in Congress to fulfill

our constitutional responsibility to fund and support our military.

Mr. Speaker, it has been more than 15 years since American and allied forces invaded Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime and stamp out the terrorist breeding ground it harbored. Many brave Americans have given their lives in the struggle to defeat the al-Qaida terrorist threat and protect our homeland. It is incumbent on us as a nation to honor their sacrifice by never allowing it to be in vain.

So much has been given and, because of that, so much has been gained. There is no question in my mind that our country is safer and the world is freer because of the work our military has done and continues to do in Afghanistan. That is an important truth I am reminded of in a powerful way each time I visit Afghanistan, and I am compelled to share it with my colleagues here in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I have said for years that the test for our success in Afghanistan going forward is the preservation of the gains made by women and girls. Having observed the treatment of women and girls in Afghanistan over many years now, I can tell you that the progress today is as fragile as ever.

There is good news. New laws criminalize violence toward women and offer them unprecedented legal protections. Girls are attending school and going to college. Women are working in government, serving in the military, in the police force, and even running for office. There is an Afghan Women's Chamber of Commerce that specifically works to see that women are incorporated into the nation's economic future.

For American women like me who grew up with parents telling me I could achieve anything I wanted to, those kinds of things are commonplace. For Afghan women who grew up in a culture that has subjugated them to second-class citizenship or worse, these activities are nothing short of extraordinary. Centuries of repression are being reversed, and a new generation of women that expects and demands basic rights is taking hold.

During our visit, our delegation was honored to meet with the Afghan First Lady, Mrs. Ghani, and many other women leaders. We discussed the opportunities now available to Afghan women that weren't conceivable 50 years ago under the Taliban, and most importantly they explained just how critical these gains are to the overall stability of Afghanistan.

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While it is certainly encouraging to listen to these remarkable stories of hope and progress, there exists a deep concern among Afghan women about seeing these important gains backslide and their rights erode. In fact, in some areas of the country, this is already happening. The Taliban's resurgence amid the drawdown of coalition forces presents a major threat that we must acknowledge.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow this to happen. We cannot allow the gains we have made in Afghanistan to fall by the wayside.

We know all too well what can happen when radical oppressive ideologies are allowed to fester in hostile nations. Make no mistake: because freedom and fairness for Afghan women is essential to the security of our Nation, it is also crucial to our own.

That is why I am pleased that President Trump is reviewing our strategy in Afghanistan, including a reevaluation of troop levels and our rules of engagement.

Simply put, if we are going to be in Afghanistan, we need to be willing to do what it takes to succeed. Of course, the Afghan people must take the reins of their country's future, but the United States will play a key role in ensuring a lasting peace.

Right now I fear we have tied the hands of our military through reduced force strength and limited rules of engagement. We should never send our military men and women into harm's way without the tools and resources they need to get the job done. Reevaluating our force strength and rules of engagement is the right decision, and I look forward to hearing from President Trump and Secretary Mattis as the NATO summit approaches.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased that Congress was able to deliver a comprehensive appropriations bill that properly funds our military. Funding the government by short-term extensions takes away the Pentagon's ability to plan for the future. With everything going on in the world right now, including the situation in Afghanistan, we cannot hinder our commanders with financial uncertainties.

One of the reasons I was so eager to serve on defense appropriations was having the opportunity to reverse military cuts that made no sense. For the last several years, we have been in constant tension with the Obama administration, whose sequestration policy threatened to hollow out our military. But not anymore.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues who joined me on the delegation.

FLEXIBLE FLOW MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. FASO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the House's attention today to the ongoing negotiations between New York City and the States of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, regarding the Flexible Flow Management Program.

The current Flexible Flow Management Program, which governs New York City reservoir releases into the Delaware River Basin, expires at the end of this month on May 31. This interstate agreement is a critically im-

portant water management tool that helps mitigate downstream impacts of New York City's reservoirs.

In addition to supporting the water allocation goals, the Flexible Flow Management Plan helps control the flow of water downstream, decreasing the likelihood of catastrophic flooding events. The FFMP also provides critical support to the Delaware River freshwater trout fishery, which is an important part of the Catskill's regional economy.

Unfortunately, if the Flexible Flow Management Plan is allowed to expire, we jeopardize the safety and well-being of constituents along the entire length of the Delaware River. The progress that has been made towards finalizing the FFMP agreement cannot be lost due to a breakdown in communications among decree party members.

I encourage all parties to return to the table from their respective States and agree to at least a 1-year extension to allow the negotiation process to continue.

Mr. Speaker, I call attention to this important issue because it greatly affects the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands, indeed millions, of people in the entire Delaware River Valley and the Delaware River estuary, which covers New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the State of Delaware.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter I sent to the four States on May 11, 2017, on this important matter.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, May 11, 2017.

Secretary SHAWN GARVIN,
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and
Environmental Control, Dover, DE.

Commissioner BOB MARTIN,
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection,
Trenton, NJ.

Secretary PATRICK McDONNELL,
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental
Protection, Harrisburg, PA.

Commissioner BASIL SEGGOS,
New York State Department of Environmental
Conservation, Albany, NY.

Acting Commissioner VINCENT SAPIENZA,
New York City Department of Environmental
Protection, Flushing, NY.

DEAR MEMBERS: As Decree Party Members, I want to thank you all for being willing and active participants during Flexible Flow Management Plan (FFMP) negotiations over the last number of years. Your past willingness to engage with all stakeholders is admirable.

Unfortunately, I am disheartened to hear that a finalized FFMP has yet to be established. Despite the recent breakdown in the conversation, I believe that it is not too late to continue collaborative negotiations toward a final agreement. With the deadline fast approaching, it is vitally important that all Decree Party Members return to the table to continue the dialogue. Incredible reforms and relationships have been established over the last decade; we cannot let these efforts go to waste.

I understand that several proposals to improve basin management and releases have been suggested up to this point, and I urge all Decree Party Members to consider positive reforms, including:

Thermal mitigation banks to provide support to cold-water fisheries during times of thermal stress in the Pepacton, Neversink, and Cannonsville ecosystems;